

# U.S – Oman Trade Bulletin

Q2: April, June & July, 2014



April 8-10 “Reverse Road Show”

April 13 OTC Sendoff

April 29<sup>th</sup> – May 1<sup>st</sup> - CISCO Girls in IT Event

April 30- May 2 Discover Global Markets Forum

May 5-8 OTC Conference in Houston, Texas

May 14 Ministry of Manpower Policy Panel

June 1 Glasspoint Site Visit

June 4 U.S. Business Webinar featuring Oman Airports Management Co.

June 9 SASLO Labor Law Workshop

June 24 Sas Incubator Visit

June 25 - Women in Science Event

July 1 - Dubai Mercantile Exchange Visit

Upcoming Events

## “Reverse Road Show” Trade Delegation

From April 8-10, the U.S. Embassy welcomed a “reverse road show” of U.S. companies invited to Oman by H.E. Dr. Ali al-Sunaidy, the Minister of Commerce and Industry, during the inaugural Omani Business Road Show to the United States last October. The Embassy worked with Omani counterparts to provide a program that met each company’s objectives in terms of exposure to investment opportunities in the Sultanate, matchmaking with local companies, and access to key decision-makers.



*Ambassador Holtz hosted U.S. “reverse” trade mission delegates for a briefing at her home on April 9. The 18 American trade delegates covered the spectrum of sectors, including defense, IT, energy, healthcare and infrastructure. Along with major firms such as Lockheed Martin, Lord Corporation, Motorola and HP, the delegation comprised many SMEs offering expertise in fields such as social media marketing, workforce training, and green technology solutions.*



*Economic and Commercial Officer Emily Shaffer accompanied visiting delegates to a presentation focused on infrastructure-related opportunities held at the Ministry of Transportation and Communications April 9.*



*Anil Vishnoi, the CFO of Oman's downstream manufacturing investment agency Takamul, engaged visiting U.S. trade delegates and members of the Oman American Business Council (OABC) after a U.S. Embassy "Direct Line to U.S. Business" webinar on manufacturing opportunities on April 9. OABC hosted a networking reception prior to the webinar.*



*To cap off the trade mission, the group enjoyed a site visit to Duqm, Oman's strategic new port city and site of billions in new investments. U.S. Embassy Economic and Commercial Officer Emily Shaffer and Political-Military Officer Michael Mitchell prepare to board the flight with visiting U.S. trade delegates on April 10.*



*David Hamod, President of the National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce; Omani Ambassador to the United States H.E. Hunaina al-Mughairy; the Honorable Greta C. Holtz, U.S. Ambassador to Oman; and Khalid al-Shuabi, Director General of International Organizations and Commercial Relations at the Ministry of Commerce, enjoy a briefing by the Special Economic Zone Authority of Duqm (SEZAD) on April 10.*



## International Buyer Program – Offshore Technology Conference

On April 13, Ambassador Greta C. Holtz hosted a sendoff celebration at the U.S Embassy in Muscat for Omani business people participating in the International Buyer Program (IBP) at the Offshore Technology Conference (OTC) in Houston, Texas May 5-8. OTC is the largest industry trade show in the world, and featured both onshore and offshore equipment, services, and expert speakers.



*Ambassador Holtz and the OTC participants*



*Ambassador Holtz; Emily Shaffer, Economic and Commercial Officer; Ida Mathew, Commercial Specialist, U.S. Embassy.*



*Ambassador Holtz presenting Ken Henderson, Construction Manager at Oman Tank & Terminal Company (OTTCO), with the briefing packet for OTC.*

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## Cisco Career Guidance Event

From April 29-May 1, the U.S. Embassy and American company Cisco partnered on a career guidance program for Omani college students. The seven students were hand-chosen from Muscat universities for the three-day workshop held at Cisco's offices. The event included an introduction from U.S. Ambassador Greta C. Holtz, a resume writing clinic, interviewing skills practice, and guidance on the use of social media for finding a job. At the end of the course, one of the students received an internship with Cisco. The U.S. Embassy congratulates all of the participants on their excellent work and thanks Cisco for proactively preparing young men and women for successful IT careers.



*Participants pose with their workshop certificates.*



*A student practicing her interviewing skills.*





*An Omani student practices good eye contact during a job interview.*



*Participants completing an exercise describing the characteristics of a good employee.*



*Ambassador Holtz engages with students, along with host Iyad Alchammat, Cisco Country Manager.*

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## Discover Global Markets Forum

On May 1-2, U.S. Embassy Economic & Commercial Officer Emily Shaffer presented on opportunities in Oman at the annual Discover Global Markets Forum in San Antonio, Texas. This gave American companies who are looking for foreign business partners an opportunity to further explore their options, including recommendations for matchmaking with partners in Oman, sector-based project development updates, and a better understanding of the local business climate.



*Embassy Muscat's Commercial Officer counseled new-to-export companies and presented on infrastructure opportunities in Oman at the Discover Global Markets Forum in San Antonio May 1-2.*





*The U.S. Commercial Service Discover Global Markets forum (formerly known as ACCESS) brought together senior commercial diplomats from throughout the Middle East, Africa, and Asia to provide strategic support and briefings to U.S. companies interested in exporting overseas.*

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## Offshore Technology Conference

From May 5-8, Embassy Muscat's Economic & Commercial Officer Emily Shaffer led a delegation of more than 20 Omani buyers to the annual Offshore Technology Conference (OTC) in Houston, Texas. OTC is the largest gathering of onshore and offshore oil and gas industry professionals and suppliers in the world. The Omani delegates benefitted from advance scheduling of targeted "Business2Business" matchmaking meetings with American suppliers, exclusive invitations to various networking receptions at the show, and logistical support.



*Embassy Muscat's Commercial Officer Emily Shaffer joined other Commercial officials from U.S. Embassies around the world for a professional development tour on the OTC show floor on May 7. The group received a briefing at the American Petroleum Institute booth, and learned about API's important work in helping set standards and train professionals for the petroleum industry worldwide.*



*The U.S. Embassy Commercial Officers were also hosted by Modern Group, the parent company of Dragon and Tiger oilfield equipment companies, which manufacture in Texas and export globally.*



*The group received a briefing on Seabotix' innovative seafloor exploration robots and control centers.*



*The group ascended a sample rig made by Schramm, a leading U.S. drill rig manufacturer based in Westchester, PA. Schramm has recently supplied high-quality rigs to Oman. Here the Commercial Specialists from Mexico and Cyprus look on as Fred Slack, Schramm's international business manager, briefs the group.*

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## Ministry of Manpower Policy Panel

On May 14, the Oman American Business Council hosted a panel discussion with representatives from the Ministry of Manpower at the Grand Hyatt Hotel. The Manpower officials addressed recent issues, such as enforcement of a ban on expatriate job-switching, difficulties in obtaining work permits for female expatriates, and expedited labor clearances for “excellent” grade companies.





*Ministry of Manpower officials responding to OABC member questions.*

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## Glasspoint Site Visit

On June 1, Ambassador Holtz and a U.S. Embassy team visited the site of Glasspoint's successful 7MW solar steam generation pilot at Amal oilfield. The pilot, which exceeded timeline, budget, safety, and performance expectations, has demonstrated that solar energy is a viable source of steam for enhanced oil recovery, allowing for conservation of scarce natural gas. Expansion of the technology in Oman will create significant in-country value for local suppliers and manufacturers.



*Glasspoint VP Daniel Palmer and CEO Rod McGregor, along with Glasspoint engineers, welcomed Ambassador Holtz and team.*

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## Direct Line to U.S Business Webinar

On June 4, U.S. Embassy Muscat held its ninth Direct Line to U.S. Business webinar, presenting Opportunities Related to Oman's New Airports. Khalfan al-Shuali, Director of Readiness for Oman Airport Management Company (OAMC), invited American companies to bid on many available opportunities, including IT systems, fire safety, utility management, and data storage, at the upcoming new Muscat and Salalah International airports and regional Sohar, Adam, and Duqm airports.



*The OAMC team networks with members of the Oman American Business Council at a pre-webinar reception in the Embassy.*



*U.S. Ambassador Greta C. Holtz receives a book on Oman's Airports from Khalfan al-Shuali, Readiness Director for OAMC.*





*Ambassador Holtz thanks Khalfan al-Shuali and his OAMC team for reaching out to the American business community to respond to the many opportunities offered by the imminent opening of Oman's new airports.*

## SASLO Workshop

On June 10, the Oman American Business Council and the SASLO Legal Training Center presented a workshop at the Grand Hyatt Hotel for employers on Oman's Labor Law. Presentations covered such topics as: "Disciplinary Problems in the Workplace and How to Document Them;" "Contracts: Limited vs. Unlimited;" "Recognized Legal Grounds for Termination;" and "Claims for Unfair Dismissal." SASLO presenters Ahmed al-Mukhaini and Thamer al-Shahry also addressed case studies, such as abuse of leave, disorderly conduct, and religion in the workplace.



*OABC Board Member Sarah Jackson introduces the SASLO Legal Training Center presenters.*

## U.S. Ambassador, OABC Support Omani Start-Ups

U.S Ambassador Greta C. Holtz and members of the Oman-American Business Council (OABC) visited the National Business Center (NBC) and Sas, two government-run SME “incubators” located in Knowledge Oasis Muscat (KOM). At Sas, the Ambassador and members of the Oman American Business Council (OABC) heard about how the hosted Omani IT start-ups benefit from shared facilities and support, such as HR, marketing, and finance. They also toured the facility, learning about the hosted start-ups’ business ideas and experiencing the virtual reality simulation lab. At the event, Ali Daud, Chairman of the OABC and President of McDonalds Oman, announced his sponsorship of 13 IT start-ups from Sas for membership in the OABC.



*Ambassador Holtz and Sas director Maha al-Balushi hear from incubated companies on the tour.*



*Ambassador Holtz and OABC board member Garry Friend engage with young IT entrepreneurs at Sas.*



*Ambassador Holtz and Dr. Salim al-Ruzaiqi, CEO of Oman's Information Technology Authority (ITA), enjoy a chat before the tour of the Sas IT incubator.*





*The Ambassador, OABC Chairman Ali Daud, and Microsoft Public Sector Manager Saif al-Hosni listen to ITA CEO Dr. Salim al Ruzaiqi's welcome remarks surrounded by OABC and Sas incubator members.*

## Women in Science Event

On June 25, Ambassador Greta C. Holtz hosted a tea at her residence in honor of Rayan al-Kalbani, recipient of the U.S. Department of State's Women in Science Hall of Fame certificate. The Ambassador lauded Rayan as a role model for girls everywhere because of her success in creating a business out of her scientific experience and expertise. Rayan owns and manages an environmental testing lab, Mazoon Environmental and Technological Services (METS), based out of Knowledge Oasis Muscat.



*U.S Ambassador Greta C. Holtz honors Rayan al-Kalbani, Oman's 2013-2014 inductee into the U.S. Department of State's Women in Science Hall of Fame.*



*Al-Kalbani is a dynamic, young entrepreneur who founded her own company, Mazoon Environmental & Technological Services (METS) Lab, which focuses on environmental applications of biotechnology.*

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## **U.S. Embassy Economic Officers Visit the Dubai Mercantile Exchange**

On July 1, U.S. Embassy Economic Officers Emily Shaffer and Claire Ruffing visited the Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME) at the Dubai International Financial Center for briefings on how Oman's crude oil is produced, marketed, and priced. As the only regional oil producer that is not a member of OPEC (the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries), Oman is unique as the sole oil exporter to offer a competitive, transparent price. Selling oil on the DME allows for minimization of risk, future planning, and optimum pricing for both buyers and sellers. The DME is a consortium, including the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, the Oman Investment Fund, and major international banks, which provides clearing guarantees for traders. Oman's Ministry of Oil and Gas and State General Reserve Fund sit on the DME board.



*U.S. Embassy Economic Officers Emily Shaffer and Claire Ruffing ring the old trading bell at the DME. The DME offers transparent, efficient trading of Omani crude oil. The price is set daily at GMT+4.*

*The DME offers*

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## Upcoming Events

**WEFTEC 2014: Water Environment Federation Technical Exhibition and Conference** (Water Treatment Technologies & Solutions)

September 27 – October 1, 2014, New Orleans, LA, New Orleans Morial Convention Center.

**PACK EXPO International** (Packaging Equipment & Technology)

November 2-5, 2014, Chicago, IL, Pharma Expo

**POWER-GEN International 2014** (Nuclear, Conventional, and Renewable Power Generation)

December 9-11, 2014, Orlando, Florida, Orange County Convention Center

**Middle East Commercial Center (MECC) Fall Forum:** October 21-22; Cairo, Egypt - The Fall Forum will build on the momentum of this new U.S. Chamber of Commerce-driven alliance to push forward a concrete, action-oriented agenda to advance projects and policies that will contribute to greater regional economic integration and increased foreign investment. For more information, contact Josh Kram, MECC Executive Director, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, at [jkram@uschamber.com](mailto:jkram@uschamber.com).

**MECC Technology Forum:** November 19-20; Istanbul, Turkey – This forum will bring together all the key stakeholders needed to support an ICT startup ecosystem, including entrepreneurs, venture capital funds, limited partners, incubators, accelerators, angel investors, policy makers, regulators, academia, and legal and accounting firms. The MECC will launch a new association to dramatically build capacity to drive the development of ICT innovation and business in the region. Contact: Josh Kram at [jkram@uschamber.com](mailto:jkram@uschamber.com)

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